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Organizational Cultures of Libraries as a Strategic Resource

Michelle L. Kaarst-Brown, Scott Nicholson, Gisela M. von Dran, and Jeffrey M. Stanton

Abstract Theorists have suggested that organizational culture is a strategic resource that has value in ensuring the continuing existence and success of organizations (Michalisin, Smith, & Kline, 1997; Barney, 1986, 1991; Hult, Ketchen, & Nichols, 2002; Gordon, 1985). This assertion is supported by various studies that have linked organizational culture to broad strategic outcomes such as an organization’s ability to manage knowledge (Davenport, Long, & Beers, 1998; Storck & Hill, 2000), innovation capability (Hauser, 1998), and strategic management of information technology (Kaarst-Brown & Robey, 1999; Reich & Benbasat, 2000; Schein, 1985). Based on this research, we suggest that there are characteristics of organizational cultures in information-based organizations that lead to increased collaboration, collegiality, and organizational effectiveness.

The present article explores these characteristics and examines whether organizational culture can be leveraged as a strategic asset to attract staff, create favorable assessments by administrators and funders, and cast library institutions in a positive light for independent media and accreditation bodies. We believe that identification of those characteristics of organizational cultures that are uniquely relevant to the growth and success of libraries can provide current and future library leaders with guidance, models, and intellectual resources to enhance personal and organizational success.

To begin, we provide an overview of the concept of organizational culture, before exploring in more detail the competing values framework (CVF) as a lens through which to view library cultures. We then apply the

key characteristics of the CVF to four prototypical library settings, before presenting our conclusions.

A Framework for Understanding Organizational Culture

Organizational Culture

The study of culture is specifically relevant to libraries because there has been significant restructuring of these institutions, particularly with respect to the span and scope of services offered. While there are several popular meanings attributed to the term “culture,” it is generally agreed in organizational research that culture is reflected in the practices, values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions of formal and informal groups (Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1991; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981, 1983; Schein, 1985). Schein’s (1985) summarized definition follows:

“Culture”: a pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 1985, p. 9)

Schein goes on to express his view that culture is a learned product of group experience. Culture is

found, therefore, where there is a definable group with a significant history, regardless of the structural level of analysis. An organization's culture is initially formed as a result of early experiences and the influence of early leaders. Over time, assumptions about how to operate become so implicitly imbedded in the underlying assumptions of action that they are difficult, if not impossible, to articulate. Libraries and other social institutions with centuries—and even millennia—of history are subject to influences that go back far beyond the lifespan of their members. Paradoxically, despite the ephemeral nature of organizational culture, it is something to which newcomers become socialized, either directly through various artifacts such as the processes, rituals, and structures of the organization, or indirectly through espoused values and beliefs, language, and myths about past victories or failures (Louis, 1990).

Libraries play an important role in society. This role is increasingly challenged, however, in both private and government funding circles. Many corporate libraries did not survive the downsizing and cost cutting of the 1990s. The current decade has seen several large state libraries in the United States face substantial funding cuts and even threats of closure. We posit that it would be beneficial for libraries to understand the strengths of the underlying culture as well as the weaknesses. Doing so can assist libraries in adapting their action plans to address an increasingly volatile external environment without losing the cultural values they hold as important to their identity and strategic strengths.

Diagnosing cultural characteristics is challenging. Schein (1985) argues that there are three levels to culture that interact: artifacts and creations, values, and basic assumptions (see Figure 1).

Schein's level one, *artifacts and creations*, is the most visible level of culture because it is the constructed physical and social environment, including the language. The language of librarianship is always changing, the latest changes resulting from the advent of online searches, digital reference resources, and Internet databases, to name a few. In addition, the technology of most libraries has shifted from book-lined shelves and card catalogs to computer networks and multimedia resources. Many of the artifacts of libraries are a blending of old and new. Although technology is included at this level, Schein's interpretation of artifacts is "the physical output of the group" rather than any reference to information technology itself. He stresses that, although insiders may not be aware of their own artifacts, they are observable to others. To develop understanding at this level, one can "attempt to analyze the central values that provide the day-to-day operating principles by which the members of the culture guide their behavior" (Schein, 1985, p. 15).

Level two focuses on *values*. Although this cultural level can provide insights into what insiders view as the *should's* of the organization or unit, there can be conflicting interpretation of what the organizational values are. Schein (1985) indicates that if leaders communicate their values, and these values lead to success, then a process of cognitive transformation takes place. This process results in beliefs and then assumptions that are

Figure 1: Levels of Culture and their Interaction

Artifacts and Creations	
Technology	Visible but often not decipherable
Art	
Visible and Audible Behavior Patterns	
Values	
Testable in the physical environment	Greater level of awareness
Testable only by social consensus	
Basic Assumptions	
Relationship to environment	Taken for Granted
Nature of reality, time and space	Invisible
Nature of human nature	Preconscious
Nature of human activity	
Nature of human relationships	

Note. Adapted from Organizational Culture and Leadership (p.14), by E. H. Schein,

1985, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

unconscious and automatic. He further suggests that many values remain conscious, explicitly articulated, and form the normative guiding principles for groups. A library's mission statement expressing principles of "userfriendly systems and fast, flexible service" is an example of this. Schein cautions that there can be a difference between deeper underlying assumptions and "espoused values," which reflect either rationalizations or aspirations for the future (Schein, 1985).

Schein's level three, *basic assumptions*, is equated to Argyris and Schön's (1978) "theories-in-use." Basic assumptions may be so implicit, taken for granted, and unconscious that surfacing them can require intensive interviewing and observation. "Yet when we do surface them, the cultural pattern suddenly clarifies and we begin to feel that we really understand what is going on and why" (Schein, 1985, p. 21).

Another aspect of cultural theory that appears particularly relevant to libraries is the concept of dominant or unitary organizational cultures versus subcultures that coexist with varying degrees of harmony or conflict (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Gregory, 1983; Martin, 1992). Deal and Kennedy (1982) were among the earliest authors to propose an integrated perspective of culture, identifying four distinct cultural patterns based on primary dimensions of risk-taking orientation and the speed/availability of feedback on actions. They proposed that the rituals, heroes, and practices of a dominant culture created a lack of legitimacy for alternative courses of action or cultural views. These early lessons learned about innovation and culture are important, and they argued that unless an organization already possessed a risk-taking, innovative quality in its culture, it would be difficult to engender it due to cultural resistance.

Libraries are often viewed through a stereotypical lens that might suggest the idea of a single, dominant, or strong culture; however, there is a large body of literature (Frost, et al. 1991; Kaarst-Brown & Robey, 1999; Martin, 1992; Meyerson & Martin, 1987) in other occupational domains that support multicultural frameworks. In particular, Martin's (1992) view of unitary, differentiated, or fragmented organizational culture might provide insights to understanding the subcultures that may exist in academic libraries that are governed by both tenured librarians and unionized staff, as compared to those that serve business, not for profit, or governmental parent organizations. As an example, the unitary or integrationist view of culture focuses on an orientation to organization-wide consensus, consistency in cultural artifacts, and little if any cultural ambiguity. The differentiated view of organizational culture seeks subcultural consensus, may exhibit some inconsistency in its cultural artifacts, and tends to channel ambiguity outside of the main subculture. The view of organizational culture as fragmented reflects the challenges of achieving cultural consensus and exhibits a high level of acknowledgement and acceptance of cultural ambiguity. In the fragmented organizational culture, the cultural artifacts are neither clearly consistent nor inconsistent, and newcomers or outsiders may have difficulty discerning a dominant culture other than the fact that great cultural diversity coexists (Frost, et al, 1991; Brown, 1995; Martin, 1992).

As noted by Sackmann (1991, 1992), occupational culture is in part determined by specialized training and knowledge sets. In addition to defining occupational boundaries, cultural knowledge can also define boundaries of affiliation, create barriers, or facilitate interaction and cooperation. As an example, occupational language and rituals associated with specialty fields such as medicine, library science, accounting, and others create bonds between those who share them and may exclude those who do not have knowledge of them. Lack of common cultural knowledge may negatively impact organizations because communication requires a common language about the business, as well as cultural commonality that underscores shared meaning (Barley, 1991; Sackmann, 1991, 1992; Schein, 1985, 1991; Smircich & Morgan, 1982).

A variety of strategies exist for understanding the cultures of organizations. For example, "The Balanced Scorecard," an instrument developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992) that focuses on performance criteria, is gaining wide popularity in private institutions. It puts strategy and vision, rather than control, at the center of management. It also includes innovation and learning as one of the four key indicator groups of success, the others being financial measures, operational measures on customer satisfaction, and measures on internal processes. It looks at organizations from the perspective of the customer, the shareholder, and identifies what the organization excels at, while also analyzing whether it can continue to improve and create value (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). This strategy also is consistent with earlier findings by Deal and Kennedy (1982) on the relationship between cultural values and innovation orientation. Skyrme and Amidon (1998) provide evidence of firms, such as British Petroleum and Price Waterhouse, that

measure innovation in terms of reduced cycle time, improved virtual teamwork to solve company problems more rapidly, and better ability to bring the best expertise to resolve customer problems. While these outcomes might be viewed as “softer” than economic measures, it is accepted that not all outcomes or strategic projects (such as knowledge management or cultural change) can be measured in financial terms (Skyrme & Amidon, 1998).

The Competing Values Framework as a Cultural Lens

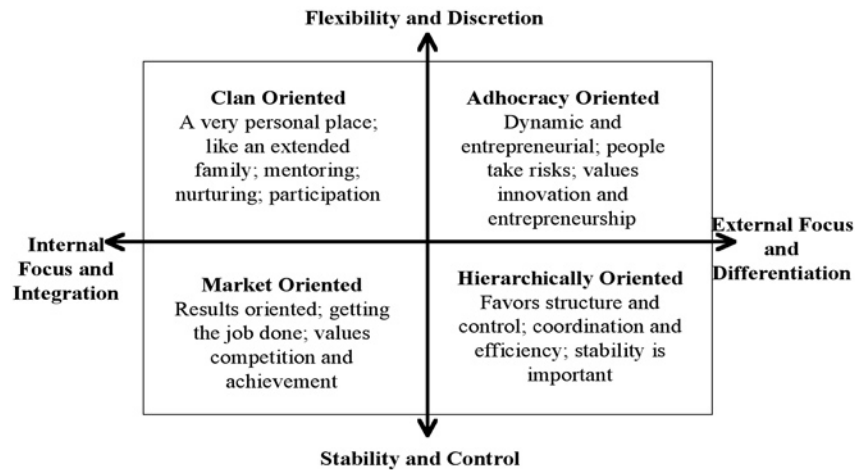
To surface deep, underlying assumptions as proposed by Schein is an extensive, costly, and often time-consuming process that is far more than most small or large libraries would like to pursue. The competing values framework (CVF) (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981, 1983; Quinn & Kimberly, 1984; Cameron & Quinn, 1999) provides a validated and focused method that is consistent with Schein’s advice to analyze the central values of the organization. By considering both the cultural values in place and comparing them to those preferred, the CVF similarly allows a comparison of the “should’s” with the *desired* state. Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1981, 1983) and Cameron and Quinn (1999) assert that the CVF is one strategy for examining the characteristics of an organizational culture that may impact its organizational effectiveness and success.

The CVF proposes that organizations reflect one or more of four cultural types: (a) clan, (b) hierarchy, (c) adhocracy, and (d) market. Before exploring these cultural types in more detail, we would like to briefly explain the basis for their development and definition. Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1981, 1983) developed the CVF framework from thirty indices measuring organizational effectiveness identified through a major review of the literature. Two independent panels were asked to reduce and organize the list of criteria in a two-stage process by applying four decision rules. Criteria were first eliminated if they were not at the organizational level of analysis, if they were not a singular index but a composite of several criteria, if they were not a construct but an operationalization, and if they were not a criterion of organizational performance. Two major dimensions and four main clusters emerged after the thirty indicators were submitted to a statistical multivariate ordering process. Through the use of multidimensional scaling, the most prominent criteria were located graphically on a three-dimensional spatial model, resulting in dimensions of organizational effectiveness that form the basis for delineating the four cultural types.

The first dimension of organizational effectiveness distinguishes criteria that stress flexibility, discretion, and dynamism from criteria that emphasize stability, order, and control. This means some organizations are effective when they are changing, adaptable, and organic, while others are effective when they are stable, predictable, and mechanistic. The second dimension discriminates between criteria that emphasize an internal orientation, integration, and unity from criteria that highlight an external orientation, differentiation, and rivalry. For example, some organizations are effective when they have a unified, congenial, internal culture, while others are perceived as effective when their culture emphasizes competition with others. The third dimension is reflective of the means-ends continuum that represents the contrast between organizational concerns for ends versus concerns for means (Cameron & Quinn, 1999, pp. 30–31; Faerman, 1993).

Based on these three dimensions, the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) was developed to diagnose six key aspects of organizational cultures or “cultural subsystems” (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). These subsystems are integrated by the CVF framework into the four theoretical culture types or archetypes of organizational effectiveness noted above. The four culture types are briefly described below in Figure 2. The OCAI permits organizations to easily analyze their current and preferred culture types using the main dimensions described above.

Figure 2: The Four Culture-Archetypes of the Competing Values Framework



Note. Adapted from Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework, by K. S. Cameron & R. E. Quinn, 1999, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

The characteristics used to classify cultural types result in an informative organizational profile based on current perceptions and desired preferences related to six “cultural subsystems” apparent at every institution. These criteria include:

- (1) *Dominant organizational characteristics*, which identify whether an organization is a) A very personal place like a family b) Entrepreneurial and risk taking c) Competitive and achievement oriented d) Controlled and structured
- (2) *Leadership style*, which can be described as a) Mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing b) Entrepreneurial, innovative, or risk taking c) No-nonsense, aggressive, results oriented d) Coordinating, organizing, efficiency oriented
- (3) *Management of employees*, which emphasizes a) Teamwork, consensus, and participation b) Individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness c) Competitiveness and achievement d) Security, conformity, predictability
- (4) *Organizational glue*, consisting of a) Loyalty and mutual trust b) Commitment to innovation and development
 - c) Emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment
 - d) Formal rules and policies
- (5) *Strategic emphasis* on a) Human development, high trust, openness b) Acquisition of resources and creating new challenges c) Competitive actions and winning d) Permanence and stability
- (6) *Criteria for success*, defined as a) Development of human resources, teamwork, and concern for people b) Having the most unique and newest products and services c) Winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition d) Dependable, efficient, and low cost

These dimensions allow us to extend the settings in which the CVF framework has been applied to library institutions. For example, in applying the CVF framework to libraries and thinking about strategic emphasis, one might try to imagine any one institution as a mixture of one or more of the following dominant characteristics:

- . • This library emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist. (Clan-oriented)
- . • This library emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued. (Adhocracy-oriented)
- . • This library emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning points in our community are dominant. (Market-oriented)
- . • This library emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important. (Hierarchy-oriented)

As these statements and the prior literature suggest, few institutions exist that represent a pure form of a single culture. At the same time, however, many leaders and staff members of library institutions would probably find that a few of these statements fit their organizations quite well, while other statements fit poorly. The CVF framework provides a basis for understanding the prevailing cultural conditions at an organization while simultaneously revealing whether conflicts exist between the apparent cultural values of leaders and managers and those enacted daily by staff and other stakeholders.

The following section reviews some of the key findings from CVF research that helped us further explore the strategic value of this model for library institutions.

Review of CVF Findings Relevant to Libraries

Several advantages accrue from using the CVF framework as a basis for examining the cultures of libraries. These include the fact that the CVF framework has been empirically validated in a variety of settings (Buenger, Daft, Conlon, & Austin, 1996; Goodman, Zammuto, & Gifford, 2001; Hooijberg & Petrock, 1993; Kalliath, Bluedorn, & Gillespie, 1999; Varner, 1996) and provides a body of empirical literature from which lessons can be learned in related contexts. The CVF has been applied and validated in both public and private organizations and in cross-cultural studies involving multiple countries. The competing values types have been linked to learning orientation (Berrio, 1999), quality of working life—including turnover, job satisfaction, empowerment, and job involvement (Goodman et al., 2001)—and as an aid in managing organizational change in libraries (Faerman, 1993). Sendelbach similarly found that organizations could use the CVF “as a common construct for examining different, complex issues and processes” (1993, p. 76).

Dellana and Hauser (1999) found that the CVF could be linked to specific criteria for the widely prized Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for excellence in practices, identifying that “higher Baldrige scores tend to be significantly related to the adhocracy and group (clan) cultural types” (p. 11). Criteria for the award consist of seven categories, including leadership, information and analysis, strategic quality planning, human resource development and management, management of process quality and operational results, and customer focus and satisfaction (NIST, 1994). The framework proposed can also provide indications of overall satisfaction with existing cultural archetypes versus preferred cultural archetypes (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Varner, 1996).

One of the insights for libraries in terms of culture as a strategic resource is the finding that certain CVF cultural types may be more desired by employees. Despite cuts in funding and the related downsizing of many libraries, there is always a need to attract and retain valued employees. We cannot generalize and say that good people will find work anywhere, but when the going gets tough, as it has in many library settings, the best people can more easily find employment elsewhere (Blair, 2000; Helfer, 1998; MacLeod, Gray, & Freidenrich, 1997; Quint, 1999). Research on the four cultural types offers some useful insights into attracting and retaining quality people in even more challenging settings than libraries.

Goodman, Zammuto, and Gifford (2001) studied 276 nurses in hospital settings and found that the group-oriented clan culture was positively correlated with organizational commitment, job involvement, empowerment, and job satisfaction. As can be expected, under these conditions turnover intentions were low. They similarly found support for lower organizational commitment, job involvement, empowerment, and satisfaction in hierarchy cultures. They also found, however, that control-flexibility elements of the competing values framework were more important than the internal-external elements.

While testing the value of the competing values framework in public, not-for-profit university setting, Berrio (1999) sought to understand the best way to achieve Senge’s (1990) goal of becoming an effective learning organization. He found that to become a more effective and efficient learning organization the organization as a whole also needed to develop a stronger clan culture. The clan culture values would provide a more supportive environment for innovation and risk taking in a traditionally stable, non-risk-taking environment. One might hypothesize that a library would need to be more market oriented, but this might not be the case. This again supports the value of understanding the key characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of libraries’ existing cultures if they are to adapt and succeed in today’s more volatile environment.

One example of the benefits of cultural understanding for libraries is found in a study by Varner (1996). Varner used the CVF to diagnose the culture of an academic library as a means of understanding how new action strategies could be developed. A questionnaire based on the competing values framework

was used to survey staff and faculty, thereby providing a profile of the library's overall organizational culture and its subcultures. One of the advantages was that using the CVF provided the library with insights into their operations in a way that was not focused on deficiencies or problems. Rather, the library found that the results provided opportunities for dialogue around current strategies, changes in their environment, and how new approaches might compete with existing ones but could produce positive new directions.

Buenger, Daft, Conlon, and Austin (1996) found that an organization's value set is particularly predictable based on contextual values, meaning that value sets differ from unit to unit. Certain patterns of values appear to exist within particular environmental and technological contexts, and these values further influence how an organization is structured. With the emerging challenges of new technology and increased private competition, as well as new structural forms such as digital libraries, libraries are not only facing increasingly dynamic contextual influences on their cultural values, but these values may be in conflict with the traditional structures. While one interpretation is an increase in cultural conflict, an alternative view, based on application of the competing values framework, found that all four of the cultural types could coexist among different groups within an organization. As an example, in a study of 141 randomly selected companies, firms tended to have a mix of two to four of the cultural types (Al-Khalifa & Aspinwall, 2001). This raises the question of differentiation or fragmentation of library cultures and an increased need to manage potentially competing cultural value sets if libraries are to retain professionally diverse and skilled staff and still meet the needs of their constituents.

Although most members of the public probably think of libraries as the little brick building in the heart of their community or the big brick building in the center of a campus, these notions greatly oversimplify the types and missions of libraries found today. Most large commercial organizations have dedicated in-house library operations, as do schools, nongovernmental organizations, and local, state, and federal government agencies. With the increasing use of the Internet and the World Wide Web, digital libraries have burgeoned, and these serve a huge variety of different user audiences. For example, a library's constituency may include people interested in health and medicine, industry and world news, law, and business. In this increasingly competitive environment, a library's organizational culture indeed might become the strategic advantage when competing with other stakeholders for dwindling resources by offering innovative, specialized, and value-added services to their customers. Examples are document delivery, digitization of older materials, instruction in search strategies for specific academic research, and verification of authenticity of sources, to name just a few.

In the following section, we apply the competing values framework to several common library types to further explore the strategic insights to be gained.

Seeking a Match between Mission and Culture: An Application of the CVF to Several Prototypical Library Types

Although we cannot hope to cover all of the types of libraries, in this section we apply the main concepts of the competing values framework to four prototypical library types: academic libraries, public libraries, small institutional libraries, and the emerging digital library. These libraries will be discussed using the six dimensions of the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument developed by Cameron & Quinn (1999): dominant characteristics of the organization, organizational leadership, management of employees, organizational glue, strategic emphases, and criteria of success. As a caveat, it must be mentioned that this exploration is based on generalizations. Therefore, individual libraries should use these descriptions as templates that can be adjusted to fit their own situation in order to better understand their organization.

Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are part of universities or colleges, and thus many of the organizational components of them are based on organizational aspects of higher education institutions. Because of this, academic libraries tend to be the most formal library organizations among the traditional library types, at least on the macro level. Traditionally these libraries were departmentalized and tended to be heavily structured, although individual departments may have been fairly flat.

In the past there were at least two levels of leadership in academic libraries—departmental managers and library administration. The departmental managers were usually librarians with considerable experience who were entrusted with developing and managing the policies within their department. Therefore, while they were responsible for the success of their department, they were given wide latitude as to how that success could be accomplished. Universities have a significant split in staffing between the faculty and staff. Since many academic libraries mirror the staffing levels of their parent organization, this encourages the professional/paraprofessional split in the library. This encouragement may be formalized through membership for one or both groups—librarians may be able to achieve tenure, and paraprofessionals may be unionized. Many times the result has been a segregated policy structure; librarians make decisions based upon their professional expertise, while those in staff roles follow structured policies.

Customarily, the organization is held together in several ways. In most cases the staff has pride in and loyalty for the institution, as school spirit can bring together the library staff around athletic events and other events, such as graduation. In addition, the managers were tasked with managing conflict in their department, leaving the interdepartmental struggles to the senior management and administration.

As in the past, the strategic emphasis of the academic library is multifaceted, but the primary mission is to ensure that the needs of the students and faculty are met. Therefore, exploration of new services and evolution of current services are limited by the library's responsibility to the community. Change happens slowly because of the academic environment and often meets with resistance from faculty who are set in their ways. Most innovation tends to occur during the summer months when the impact of failure is much lower.

Dependable support from the parent organization was the basis for success of the academic library. If the library was perceived as not meeting the information needs of the academic community, then the library failed as an organization. In this way, the library was like a utility that either met demand and succeeded or did not meet demand and failed. The library as an organization may have judged its own success through new programs and initiatives, interesting speakers, activities, and displays, and use of services; however, the community that is served by the academic library might be more interested in nothing more than dependable service. It is critical that each individual library identify outcomes that are important to the parent organization, as there is no generalizable standard for academic library performance (ACRL, 1998).

Therefore, in the scope of the competing values framework, the academic library of the past emphasized stability and control above all and internal focus and integration secondarily. This management style is appropriate when change is incremental; however, many factors have and are dramatically impacting this stability and status quo. Among these factors are rapid technological changes, new budgetary constraints and competition, demands for measurable service outcomes, increasing diversity of employees, and greater span of controls. As a result, academic library leaders and employees are looking for new organizational models and cultures that encourage empowerment, flexibility, and discretion in order to keep up with uncertain times. As Edwards (1997) argues, directors and managers of academic libraries feel constrained in the typical hierarchical structure of higher education. These management structures do not allow them to shift their library's services quickly enough to account for the rapid changes in information technologies (Edwards, 1997).

Thus the traditional hierarchical values have become dysfunctional and need to be replaced by more clan and/or adhocracy frameworks. These two management frameworks would allow academic libraries the flexibility needed in different ways. The clan-based framework would encourage smaller teams to form around certain tasks. Instead of having technical services separated from public services, this clan framework would encourage groups of individuals to be assigned to teams based around types of information sources or services. Then, if there is a change in a particular technology, the team can adjust much more quickly than if changes have to work their way through hierarchical management levels.

The adhocracy framework would encourage risk taking and entrepreneurship; library managers could empower some teams to keep the "utility" of the library running, while other teams could then explore ways of introducing new information technologies into the existing offerings. When combined with the clan framework, the resulting workplace would be more dynamic and able to respond to rapid change, but by using teams to determine the changes, the diversity offered through a work group would be utilized in offering new services.

Public Libraries

Public libraries are not tied as closely to a specific institution as academic libraries are, and therefore, they do not have as many generalizations about their organizations. These libraries support the needs of their local communities, and thus the collections, services, and policies reflect the communities and local boards of directors that they serve. Smaller public libraries may only have a few staff members and volunteers and thus be run like a small family, while larger libraries can mirror academic libraries in their formal, departmentalized structure and the need for culture changes. The split between librarians and paraprofessional staff is usually not as pronounced as in academic libraries, as there is no associated split in a parent organization.

The leadership of a public library is focused on presenting library patrons with a combination of services and materials that they want and demand, balanced with services and materials that they need and should have. Unlike a commercial organization focused on selling to the customer what they will buy, the public library has to balance the voiced demand of a subset of the patronage with the needs of many, increasingly diverse groups of patrons. To accomplish this, the management style tends to be more team oriented and involves more of the library staff in order to introduce more viewpoints in the decision-making process.

The glue that holds the organization together is pride in serving the local community and the dependability of jobs. Many public library staff are actually city or county employees and carry the stability and pay of a civil servant job. Promotions also may be tied into the same promotion schedule as other civil servants. In many public libraries, however, the head librarian is an appointed political position, and the library board is elected or appointed and may change, which can cause a rapid shift in the organizational and political tenor of the library. Like the academic library, the public library is seen as a utility; therefore, dependably resolving the information needs for the community is the top priority.

As the patron needs change, the library services must also change. Some effort, therefore, is spent understanding the patronage of the library. To meet needs, libraries may provide informational works, public meeting spaces, interesting programs, or material delivery services. Outreach programs are constantly redeveloped to meet the changing needs of the populace. The library's success is measured by the patrons who are touched by their services. Therefore, a successful library is one that is integrated into the community and is seen as an essential component of the services offered to citizens.

Public libraries have to balance flexibility with stability. Flourishing public library cultures are those that are more flexible in order to meet the needs of the patrons. Public libraries that focus too much on maintaining a static organization may not be able to meet the demands of the taxpayers. This flexibility, however, is usually at the level of the organization and not the individual; teams and committees work to make changes in library services. The focus of public libraries tends to be more external rather than internal, especially when the library is turning to the taxpayer for more resources through a vote. Therefore, successful public libraries are likely to strive for a clan culture, with some undertones of adhocracy through empowered committees.

Small Institutional Libraries

The category of small institutional libraries covers many school and special libraries. Conceptually, these libraries have a small staff and answer to a larger parent institution but are organizationally independent. A very small staff frequently runs these libraries; there may be only one librarian and perhaps a few assistants. The librarian operates under policies set by the parent organization and must answer directly to the needs of the parent organization; this can cause dramatic swings in collection policy and areas of expenditure when the library must change to meet the needs of a rapidly changing parent organization. Outside of organizational procedures, however, these librarians have considerable flexibility in how they perform their tasks. Trust and openness are important between library staff members in small libraries.

These libraries have to be very outward focused. In order to succeed in the parent organization, they need to make sure they meet the needs and are visible and esteemed members of the organization. Success is judged by the repeated use of library services. Failure to meet the needs of the members of the organization can result in library budgets being severely reduced in lean times.

There are some differences between library types in this category. The amount of job security varies greatly and affects the aggressiveness required by the library. A corporate library must take risks and be

seen as an asset to the company in order to survive lean times. A school library, conversely, is a required component for schools and will therefore survive; the staff of these libraries may then choose to enjoy the stability and simply meet the expressed needs of the faculty and students instead of actively pursuing patrons.

Therefore, the type of culture exhibited in these libraries depends upon the setting. Most small libraries allow their staff a high amount of flexibility and, therefore, rely upon their professional staff's judgment to accomplish tasks. These libraries need to develop either the clan culture or the adhocracy culture, depending upon how much focus they place on the external needs of the organization over the internal needs of the library and how much they must do to remain in existence.

Introducing Digital Libraries

Many libraries have introduced digital library services to supplement their existing services. In addition, stand-alone digital library sources and services have appeared. These consist of nonprofit institutions and for-profit organizations such as those that create Web search tools that offer direct competition to traditional libraries for digital information seekers. Many of these for-profit services have a very different managerial focus, and libraries wishing to compete will have to consider adjusting their organizations in order to be successful.

The one cultural archetype not yet discussed is the *market culture*. Because traditional libraries had their primary patronage defined as those people who were members of a defined community or organization and most library services had to be used in person, libraries did not have to compete. Most patrons had a choice of only a few services, and the decision usually came down to either convenience or the type of information needed. With the advent of the Internet, however, physical location does not matter for digital library services, and patrons have the choice of many more sources to have their information needs met. The library is just one more Web search tool to many users. Therefore, aspects of the market culture, such as the focus on market share, market leadership, and competition, are essential for libraries wishing to offer competitive digital library services.

One option for libraries that wish to maintain a more traditional organization is to create a flexible suborganization responsible for the digital library services. This group would, in essence, be its own library and would be able to take risks, change their structure, develop their own measures for success, and be freed from a more traditional hierarchical structure. Burd (2003) reported that librarians are more satisfied and committed to a library organization that exhibits many of these aspects. The downside to this concept is the library may see a loss of clan culture, as part of the organization will be seen differently not only by patrons but also by administration; in addition, staff members on both sides of the organization may find reason for complaint. Additional culture conflict may hamper maintenance of collegiality and result in the loss of the creative potential of different cultural values.

Traditional libraries may not see the need to compete with these for-profit services. Many of these libraries succeed based upon measurable use of their services and the perception of value of library services. As more people turn to the for-profit information services and away from the library, traditional usage numbers will decrease. A library then must decide to either compete with the for-profit information services (moving toward the market culture) or to change their organization and focus on other types of services, such as programs, education, and outreach (staying in a clan culture). Either way, the little brick building on the corner can no longer afford to remain static in its offerings and, therefore, cannot remain static in its organizational structure or complacent about its culture.

Conclusion

This article explores the applicability of the four cultural types of the competing values framework to libraries so that their organizational culture can be leveraged as a strategic asset to attract staff, create favorable assessments by administrators and funders, and cast library institutions in a positive light for independent media and accreditation bodies. There is enough evidence from the organizational culture and general CVF studies to support the argument that culture can illuminate critical characteristics of an organization's culture or subculture. In addition, the CVF framework has already proved useful in library, public, and private settings for understanding and guiding culture change (Faerman, 1993; Varner, 1996). The view proposed by Barney (1986) of culture as a strategic resource is that it is unique and hard to imitate. The competing values framework suggests that there are four distinct yet definable and standard

culture types. What we hope our discussion has presented, however, is that the strategic aspect is in understanding the culture's fit with organizational contexts and the need to evaluate how to keep what is valued while adapting and changing with the dynamics of the external environment.

Specifically, libraries in transition can use the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument to determine the current perceptions of their organizational cultures and identify the types of culture leaders want to create to increase organizational effectiveness in a turbulent environment. The instrument is also helpful in determining employee preferences in regards to work cultures and starting the dialog on how a preferred culture might be implemented. In addition, the OCAI provides the means to assess the skills of library leaders and managers who plan to engage in a culture change and if necessary provide staff development and training to facilitate success.

The conditions (indicators) that could trigger such an assessment include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. 1. A change in leadership after years of relative stability. Leadership changes bring with them new expectations from employees, customers, managers, and resource providers. The OCAI is a means to prepare organizational members for the stresses and opportunities that arise from implementation of change and provide them with a voice in selecting the preferred futures.
2. 2. A library suffers major budget cuts while simultaneously experiencing the increased expectation for proliferating information in a variety of formats. The competition for shrinking resources is driving the demand for fiscal responsibility and budgetary accountability in most academic and municipal institutions. At the same time, information has become an important societal commodity that commands escalating prices as well as various delivery methods. In order to satisfy the demands for expensive materials, library managers and leaders need to carefully and strategically deploy their human resources budgets to achieve effective as well as efficient services. The OCAI can detect dysfunctional departmental or institutional cultures and can be used to develop people as change agents as well as create supportive environments.
3. 3. Changing demographics call for different managerial skill sets. To maximize the opportunities for better services created by a diverse labor force, library managers and employees require training and development to cope with increased empowerment, conflicts, and communication demands. The OCAI is an instrument that can reveal underlying cultural assumptions that might derail or sabotage a library's emerging consensus or vision for the future.
4. 4. Libraries are service organizations; as such, they do not create budgetary resources but consume them. Consequently, they have to constantly

justify their expenditures and demonstrate high organizational performance. Interactions with library employees and customers are crucial indicators used to judge commitment, productivity, effectiveness, and service orientation. The OCAI can, again, be used to measure critical organizational criteria that might impact perceptions of users positively or negatively.

This article has important implications for the leadership of libraries. Organizational cultures and values are important resources that need to be managed like other resources. Their management assists in developing group perceptions, coordinating group activities and decision-making, and balancing individual and organizational interests. A cultural assessment can help in articulating a clear mission and can serve to align diverse intra-organizational cultures while facilitating change and organizational transformations. Cameron and Quinn (1999) discovered in the organizations they studied that the highest-performing leaders had developed the capacity to lead in each of the four cultural types, meaning that they had the ability to move an organization from one type to another in order to align it with changing environmental conditions. In addition, leaders who are behaviorally complex are perceived as more effective by both subordinates and superiors. The OCAI provides library leaders and managers with the tools to assess their skills and improve their personal effectiveness in facilitating organizational culture change.

Library education can support the ability of library leaders to perform this important organizational work by creating awareness in all students about the need for continued improvement and providing them with the tools for accepting change as inevitable and invigorating. Part of library education should be devoted to developing change agents by providing leadership training and continuing education opportunities for librarians who assume managerial and leadership positions. In addition, experiences of

cultural change in the private and public sector can be shared through research and publication in the library literature.

Changing an organization's culture is not a quick fix but a multiyear process. Research opportunities are created by periodically assessing progress in the implementation of a new organizational vision. Such assessments provide feedback to all participants, chances for discussions and corrections, if necessary, and stories of successes to be shared with internal as well as external constituents. They will build pride in newly discovered abilities for personal and organizational change and infuse library staff and leadership with the energy required to take on the next challenges of continuing improvement.

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Notes

1. An effective learning organization is conceptualized as one in which the members continually acquire, shape, and use new knowledge to adapt to an ever-changing environment (Senge, 1990).

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